CSU police investigate anti-gay crime at dorm

Hate crime

Colorado State University police are trying to find out who perpetrated an anti-gay hate crime in one of the school's dormitories. The same night, anti-gay comments were scrawled in chalk at one of CSU's public areas.

The Associated Press

FORT COLLINS — Colorado State University police are investigating an alleged hate crime at one of the school's dormitories.

Someone defecated in front of a student's room in Allison Hall on Nov. 5 and left a note filled with virulent anti-gay messages, campus police said.

Anti-gay messages were chalked in front of the university's student center the same evening, but police believe the incidents were unrelated.

"It happened about that same time, but I can't make any direct correlation between this and what happened on the plaza," said Capt. Bob Chaffee.

"This was more of a specified threat against an individual."

The incident at the Lory Student Center sparked a debate among students about free speech.

University officials determined the messages were protected by the First Amendment.

They are not, however, treating the incident in the dorm the same way.

"This was clearly not protected by free speech," said university police officer Heather Herrera.

If a suspect is caught, he or she could face charges, including the misdemeanor charge of harassment. Chaffee said the incident has caused "extreme concern and fear" in the student, whose name wasn't released.

Lisa Phelps, director of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Student Services at Colorado State, has offered support and counseling to the victim.

The incident in Allison Hall is the latest hate crime at Colorado State directed toward gays and lesbians, although it is the first to be reported to campus police this year.

Campus police reported five hate crimes to the FBI in 1998; six in 1997; and 15 in 1996.

A fraternity and sorority were disbanded last year after a scarecrow on their homecoming parade float was found scrawled with anti-gay epithets. That was only days after Matthew Shepard, an openly gay University of Wyoming student, was savagely beaten. Shepard died five days later at a Fort Collins hospital.

Police believe Shepard was attacked in part because he was gay. Two men have been sentenced to life in prison without parole for the attack.

CSU student body President Eric Berglund said while the incidents are horrific, they do not represent the student body as a whole.

"I think hate crimes at CSU are few and far between," Berglund said. "With 23,000 people at CSU, you are bound to have something happen, but I don't think it reflects what our university environment is all about."

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Eric Berglund, CSU student body president

Letters

GUN CONTROL

ackground checks keep folks from getting firearms legally

The Gazette's report on the so-called suc-ess of the Colorado Bureau of Investiga-on's background checks on prospective un buyers left me with two questions "Owens wants Colorado to continue gun hecks," Dec. 4)

First, how many of those citizens denied urchase were turned down by the CBI de-pite a clean history? Even if only a fraction f prospective buyers were denied their ight to self-protection without a legitimate eason, that represents a significant num-er of law-abiding Coloradans wrongly de-ied their Second Amendment right. This ould be a potentially life-threatening situa-ion, as in the instance where a woman feels he needs a handgun to protect herself gainst a stalker or ex-husband.

Second, the report assumes that prospec-ve buyers did not buy a gun when they

My entire trip to school was a nightmare of trying to ride through either ice or 8-12-inch snow drifts.

If I am not mistaken, there is a city code that states that you must clear your sidewalks within 24 hours of the end of a storm. This seems like time enough. I was shoveling my sidewalk the next morning.

I simply ask this; Go out and shovel your sidewalk. If not that, pay some neighborhood kids to do it for you. Besides, shoveling is good exercise.

Chris Brands
Colorado Springs

What does it take for elderly to get walks cleared?

I have lived in this well-to-do neighborhood for 30 years. Snowplows seldom come up our hill and if they do they throw the snow right over the already-cleaned sidewalks and driveways. We are several widows and widowers who are up in age and whenever we have a lot of snow we need

Personally I'd be happy with either McCain or George W. Bush but I resent the unfair attack against McCain. I do not believe McCain has a temper which disqualifies him. True he holds passionate views regarding campaign finance reform and the influence of special interests. But isn't it time we elect someone who won't weasel on the issues because he might lose a vote or two? Nothing is more important than cleaning up the political process.

Does the senator have a temper? Admirable self-restraint is the opposite of having a temper. I ask Trent Lott and his co-critics if they believe they could have exercised the self-restraint that the senator did when he resisted the five-and-a-half years of torture, humiliation, and degradation inflicted upon him by the North Vietnamese?

The real reason Lott and others oppose McCain is his passionate support of campaign finance reform and his willingness to take a bold approach to the making of public policy. Our political process needs to be cleaned up.